

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

A) Identification

Historic Name: **Kingston Scout Hall**
Common Name: Robert P. Smiley Boy Scout Hall Troop 555
Address: 26128 Bannister St. NE
City: Kingston, WA 98346 County: Kitsap

B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

The Scout Hall is on the northwest corner of the Kola Kole Park property on the east side of Bannister Street between California and Oregon Streets. The park includes the Kingston School House building in the southeast corner, which is already on the State Register.

C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: Robert Gelder, Commissioner, Kitsap County District 1
Address: 614 Division Street, MS-4
City: Port Orchard State: WA Zip: 98366-4676

D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel: 43160750010002
Boundary Justification: THE TOWN OF KINGSTON: BLK-075 LOT-001 D-00 LOTS 1-12 BLK 75 LOTS 1 to 4 BLK 76 LOTS 5 & 6 EXC TO RD TGW VAC RD

FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Deborah Mackinnon, Kingston Historical Society
Address: PO Box 263
City / State / Zip: Kingston, WA 98346 Phone: 360-881-0087
Email: kingstonwahistory@gmail.com Nomination Date: February 1, 2020

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E) Category of Property (Choose One)

- building* *structure (irrigation system, bridge, etc.)* *district*
 object (statue, grave marker, vessel, etc.) *cemetery/burial site*
 historic site (site of an important event) *archaeological site*
 traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.)
 cultural landscape (habitation, agricultural, industrial, recreational, etc.)

F) Area of Significance – Check as many as apply

- The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.*
- The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which served as a focal point for a community or group.*
- The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.*
- The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.*
- The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, recreation).*
- The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.*
- The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.*
- The property was designed or built by an influential architect, or reflects the work of an important artisan.*
- Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or life ways.*

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G) Property Description

The Kingston Scout Hall is located in the northwest corner of Kola Kole Park, just west of SR 104, four blocks north of the ferry terminal. The park is currently home to the Washington Heritage Register listed Kingston School House, built in 1909. The hall was built just beyond the outfield of the Ed Moon baseball diamond and rests on a concrete slab. Landscaping around the hall is minimal, although a large clump of cedar trees lies directly to the south of the building. A gravel walkway, contained by wood strips leads to the front door of the building on the north façade.

The 20' X 30' Scout Hall faces north and is clad in ½ round logs. The main body of the hall is laid in vertical logs, while the two gable ends are infilled with horizontal logs. The exterior is painted a burnt sienna color and is highlighted by mallard green trim.

The hall has a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles (originally cedar shakes). The soffits are open, but the rafter tails are covered. The hall has one small entry door, centered on the main north façade. There are no windows on this elevation except for a small glassed attic window in the gable end. The south façade boasts a six-panel exit door at the southwest corner. Centered on this façade is a large exterior end chimney made of concrete, stone & tile which tappers at shoulder height into a smaller chimney flue. The east façade of the hall has one window but is shuttered closed and is currently without glass. The west side of the building has two windows. The southern most one has glass but the northern one has been rendered unusable due to an interior office wall blocking it. Each measured approximately 48" wide by 36" high, and are fixed single sheets of glass. All of the windows have functional plywood shutters that are split in the middle. They are secured so that vandals cannot break in.

On the west side of the building, between the two windows, is a wooden, painted replica of the Boy Scout emblem "Be Prepared". Handmade by Scoutmaster James Miser in the mid-1960s, it is the only signage on the building.

The interior of the hall is divided into three rooms: the office, storage and main hall/meeting area. All of the walls are clad in tongue & groove cedar paneling which is original to the building. It is raw, unpainted and unstained. The floors are poured concrete painted grey. The brick fireplace at the south end of the building has been shut down for safety reasons. Instead, heat is provided by a metal woodstove donated by Scoutmaster Joe Heath. The metal chimney currently goes through the middle of the west facing roof.

The Hall has a 48 person capacity. The ceiling above the meeting area is open with exposed 2"x6" truss system. Above the office area and storage room the ceiling is closed with the space above used for storage and privileged sleepovers. The ladder to the loft originally existed on the outside wall, next to the main door. The office houses a time capsule to be opened in 2026.

Affixed to the walls of the meeting area are a variety of scout artifacts. These include a shadow box framing a variety of nautical knots created by Joseph Wallace in 1978 or '79 (Wallace served in WWII and made such displays for numerous troops); a handmade cross saw (which may have been made by Scoutmaster James Miser); and handmade snowshoes (made by Ben Napier). Furniture consists of white pews from the Kingston Christian Church, tables and a variety of chairs.

H) Significance

The Kingston Scout Hall, completed in 1962, is historical significant for its direct connection to the scouting movement on the Kitsap Peninsula. Built by volunteer labor, the hall shows the dedication of a variety of individuals to the Scouting movement.

Founded in 1853 by Benjamin Bannister, the community of Kingston was originally known as "Appletree Cove". Among the early European settlers were, W.S. Ladd and his wife Caroline who built a cabin on Appletree Cove in 1869. Nine years later Michael King bought the cabin, and he along with ten oxen and ten men began to slowly log the surrounding hills. King built many small buildings and shacks along the shore for his men and animals. By 1882, he was done and moved on, but the shacks and bunkhouses were left behind and were subsequently lived in by drifters, squatters and old loggers. People living in the area often referred to the site as "King's Town", probably as a joke. The name slowly evolved into Kingston and stuck.

The Kingston townsite was officially platted on April 24, 1890, by C.C. Calkins and Samuel B. Brierly. Calkins dreamed of Kingston as a resort town for vacationers from Seattle. He called it "the Monterey of Washington" and had drawings and a design rendered for a giant hotel on the waterfront. His vision included a boat launch, a church on the hill, and a college. However after Calkins and Brierly platted the town, a lower than expected number of people showed up to settle there. Calkins then gave up and left. The town then slowly grew, and never at the pace that Calkins had dreamed about. In the 1900s, it became a productive farming community, a smuggler's hideout, a strategic military site, an artists' haven, as well as a summer retreat for Seattle city dwellers. However today the population hovers just about 2,000 people. The town remains an unincorporated area, all civic improvements are accomplished via volunteer efforts including the creation of Kingston Scout Hall.

Scouting in the Kingston area began in 1936 when the local Garden Club chartered

the initial Kingston troop, Troop No. 528. Annual dues were ten cents, but due to labor needed on the farms, few attended and the troop floundered. By 1946 approximately 175 residents lived in Kingston and the main Scoutmaster was planning to move. He took the troop and their charter to Olalla, leaving Kingston without a Boy Scout troop for a couple of years.

The present troop dates from 1948 when the Kingston Post 7329 VFW, through the leadership of Maj. Albert H. Swift, decided to sponsor a new scout troop. Swift christened the new troop as Troop 555 or "The Triple Nickel." Despite new leadership, the program continued to struggle until 1951 when Robert P. Smiley, a former Eagle Scout, revived the troop. Smiley held the first meeting in the basement of his business, a service station and auto garage. The first lesson on creating knots, lasted 35 minutes.

Prior to the nominated Scout Hall being erected, meetings moved among the different Scoutmasters' homes. Unfortunately equipment was lost due to leadership rotation, which was detrimental to the program. In order to provide a secure meeting place, Robert P. Smiley met with County Commissioner Ed Swan who agreed to authorize building a scout hall on the northwest corner of Kola Kole Park in the 1950s. Reportedly the agreement was sealed with a simple handshake at the future site. His son, Robert J. Smiley, remembers this verbal transaction. Walking back to the service station, Smiley told his son, "Well, Bobby, the Scouts are going to have their own cabin." No legal documents were signed.

Construction of the Scout Hall was a volunteer effort and took about three years to complete (1959 to 1962). Art Steele, who worked for the Washington State ferries, served as the main project coordinator and solicited local businesses for materials. Robert P. Smiley collected newspapers in a box at the service station and, over several years, collected a little over \$900 to start the construction project. Steele secured eleven dedicated volunteers to complete the construction. After clearing the site of blackberry bushes, volunteers originally stripped logs to build a log hall but instead decided to sell them. Monies raised were then used to secure materials for a conventional stick built building instead.

Scouts learned multiple skills as they participated in the construction of the Hall with the help of adults and other volunteer laborers. Reportedly the Port Gamble Mill Co. donated and/or offered a deal on a bundle of wood and ½ round logs. Frank Salazar, Sr. donated the original windows. Reportedly the front, back and interior doors were recycled from Port Gamble houses. Art and Darrell Steele along with Bill and Sonny Woodward poured the concrete slab. Don Shawn of Amp Electric installed the electrical and Bonner of Kingston Lumber contributed nails and the roofing. Virgel Newman along with his father "Pop" Newman built the exterior stone chimney on the south side of the cabin. They instructed the Scouts to dig up rocks from around town but not rocks from the beaches since those soaked in saltwater would explode.

Since its construction, the Hall has housed numerous events both for Scout Troops and the general public. During the seventies, the local fire department sponsored an annual Easter egg hunt as a community service. That event continued for many years

always starting in front of the Scout Hall. When the Scouts weren't spending time in the hall they were out in the woods, camping or doing activities at Camp Werner on Gibbs Lake. At one point the troop had their own "milk truck" which was used to carry their equipment.

In 1985, Troop 555 held a two-day "Scoutacular" celebrating the Scout's Diamond Jubilee and to raise awareness about scouting as well to gather funds for a three-day backpacking trip in Glacier National Park, Montana. The troop built a 35-foot observation tower on Ed Moon Ball Field next to the Scout Hall and raised the flag during their ceremony with the assistance of Marine Corps buglers from Bangor. Scoutmaster Phil Landis said the purpose of the "Scoutacular" was to spur community interest in scouting and to attract new members.

However, by the next year the troop numbers had dwindled once again and the Fire Department threatened to tear down the Hall. Robert P. Smiley put a notice in the paper and rallied the community. Within 30 days, Alan Chessman (a former Eagle Scout from Colorado) assumed the role of Scoutmaster. Shutters were put on the windows and the Hall was cleaned up. Monthly pancake breakfasts were held in the VFW Hall to raise funds and recruit more Scouts. In a letter to Cheryl Steele dated July 15, 1993, County Commissioner Chris Endresen reassured Troop 555 they had use of the Hall "as long as an active Boy Scout troop remains in Kingston."

Despite their difficulties from 1961 to 2020, the troop has produced 42 Eagle Scouts. Their various Eagle Scout projects have benefited North Kitsap and include a variety of projects such as the installation of a flagpole and picnic tables at Kola Kola Park; the Kingston Christian Church Breezeway Project; a downtown Kingston Beautification Project; the Wolfle Elementary School Wetland Recovery Project; the Village Green P-Patch Garden Beds Improvement; and clean up and fencing project at the Kingston Pioneer Cemetery. These Eagle Scouts have benefited from the skills learned in Scouting and many have continued the scouting tradition. Former Kingston Eagle Scout recipient Dan Gelise, went on to serve as a Field Director in Oregon for the National Scouting organization.

In 1996, the Hall underwent a restoration that included a new roof, painting the floor and doors and general, overall maintenance. Commissioner Chris Endresen and Art Steele dedicated a plaque to the volunteers who constructed the original Hall. The community then celebrated 46 years of continuous scouting in Kingston in 1997. As Richard Norton, Commander of Ray T. Weaver VFW Post 7329, observed, "We are bonded together in the brotherhood of scouting...Our troop, our community, our Scout Hall are one."

On its 50th anniversary of the revival of the troop in 2001, the Scouts dedicated the Hall to Robert P. Smiley. Governor Gary Locke, Congress members Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell sent letters of congratulations. Virgel Newman, one of the original officials to revive the troop, sent in a \$4 contribution to the 50th anniversary celebration, though he lived out of state and was then 101 years old. He had served as the community's Postmaster for 16 years, first appointed in 1946.

As current Troop 555 Committee Chairman, Duane Drummond observes, the Scout Hall has "...served for nearly 60 years as a haven for young men in Kingston, and its surrounding communities...to develop as citizens, to embark on adventures in wilderness areas around the region, and to realize improvement projects with positive and lasting effects on Kitsap County...it is a point of continuity in the community, as a Scout today who talks about his activities...can relate to Scouts from 20-50 years ago who share their memories."

Robert P. Smiley (1915-1993) whom the Scout Hall was named grew up in Texas and served eight years in the US Navy prior to WWII. He moved with his wife Mary, son Robert J. and daughter Diane to Kingston where he eventually bought all of block 94. Over his lifetime, he started 13 different businesses in town. He owned a wrecking yard and auto sales business in 1950 that is now the site of Kingston Mini Storage, the GrubHut and the Country Pet Shoppe.

Because of his entrepreneurial and philanthropic efforts, residents called Smiley "Mr. Kingston" and in 1962, he accepted the World's Fair Honor City plaque for Kingston as its unofficial mayor. Known as "Smiley", whenever anyone in the community asked to solve a problem they were told, "Go see Smiley." Upon his death in 1993, his family established the Smiley Charitable Foundation, later renamed the Smiley Charitable Fund, which distributed annual gifts to local charities and services over 26 years.

Perhaps fittingly the Smiley Charitable Fund made its final distribution of \$14,000 in 2019 to Kingston-NK Rotary for restoration of the Scout Hall with the intent that funds would be matched by local contributions. Kingston-NK Rotary assumed sponsorship of the Kingston Scouts in August 2019. The Scout Hall is now being restored for a second time and houses Troop 1-555 and Pack 4-555 who refer to themselves as "The Grand Old Nickel."

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I) Documentation

Xerox and attach any information or evidence that supports the property's significance.

Written Sources (books, articles, newspapers):

- Application for Troop Charter, Boy Scouts of America, dated April 26, 1951.
Boy Scout Troop 555. Letter to County Commissioners of Kitsap County requesting land use permit and building permit. Dated Nov. 10, 1958.
"BRIEF: Kingston Troop 555 to celebrate 50 years." Kitsap Sun: April 4, 2001.
Building Permit No. A-1705. Dated March 30, 1959.
Carter, Ron. "Rotary Club and Smiley Foundation Team to Restore Scout Hall." Kingston-NK Rotary Bulletin, Aug. 18, 2019.
Chief Kitsap District History Committee, "The Scouting Trail: The History of Scouting in Kitsap County 1917-1990.
Drummond, Duane. Emails dated October 13, 2019 and January 23, 2020.
Endresen, Chris, Kitsap County Commissioner. Letter to Cheryl Steel dated July 15, 1993.
Gelder, Robert. Kitsap County Board of Commissioners. Letter dated September 25, 2019.
Kingston Historical Society. Images of America Kingston. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2019.
McDonald, Rob. "Bob Smiley, 'Mr. Kingston,' dies at 78." Bremerton, WA: The Sun, 1993.
Newman, Virgel. Ancestry.com accessed September 16, 2019.
Newman, Virgel. Personal letter dated 4-5-2001.
"Strange sights at Scoutacular." and "Scout Tower." Bremerton, WA: The Sun, Feb. 1985.
Osborne, Harold F. Little City By the Sea. Kingston, WA: Apple Tree Press, 1990.
Smiley, Robert J. "The Triple Nickel Troop 555 Early History, Present Status, Future Vision," 1997.
Sole, Kathy. "Cub Scouts Again Occupy Kingston Cabin." Community News: August, 2017.
Stone, Scott. "Kingston's Boy Scout Troop 555 celebrated its 46th birthday..." Bremerton, WA: Kitsap Sun, Feb. 9, 1997.

Oral History/Interviews:

Chessman, Alan. October 11, 2019.

Miser, Dave and Connie. October 11, 2019.

Smiley, Robert, Jr. via email, September 25, 2019, phone conversation October 25, 2019

Steele, Cheryl. September 27, 2019; October 11, 2019; October 31, 2019 and January 12, 2020.

Steele, Gary. October 11, 2019 and January 12, 2020.

Woodward, Sonny, October 11, 2019.

J) Map and Photographs

Attach copies of historic maps or photos if available, and current photos (5 x 7 B & W). Include a current map – appropriate U.S.G.S. map and parcel map – with the location of the property and its boundaries clearly marked. (see instructions)

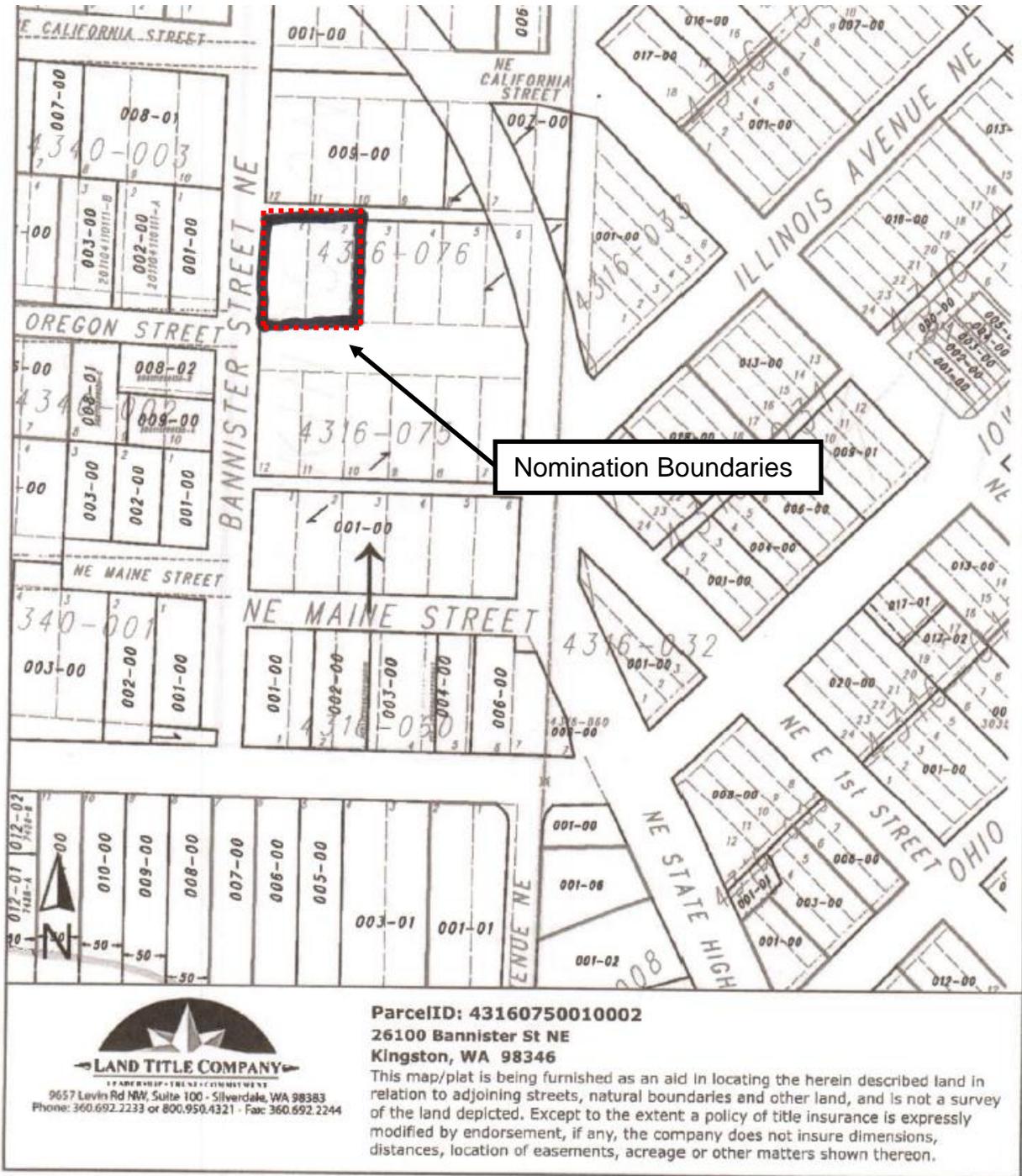


Google Earth Map
Kingston Scout Hall

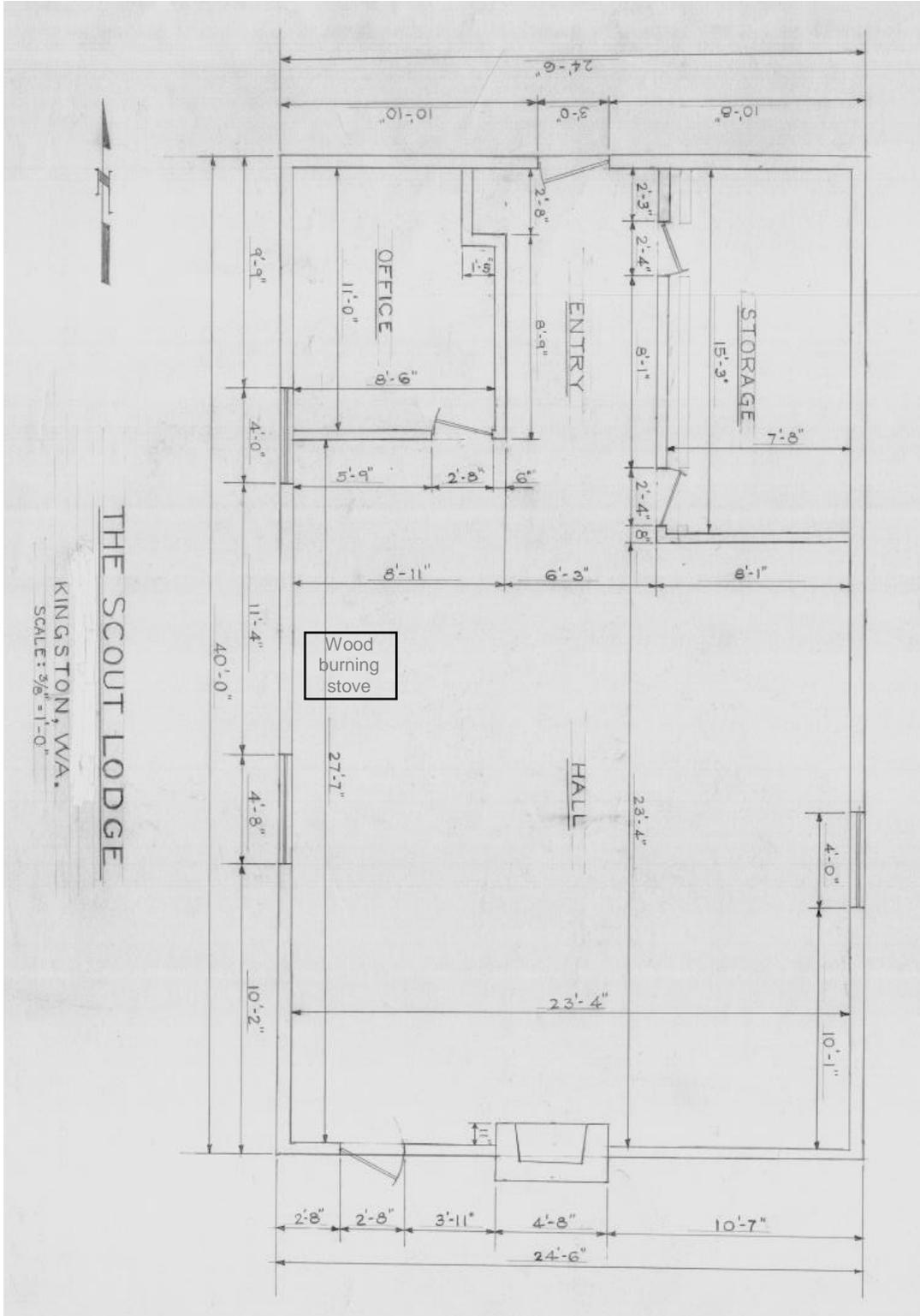
Name:

Latitude:

Longitude:



Plat Map
 Kingston Scout Hall



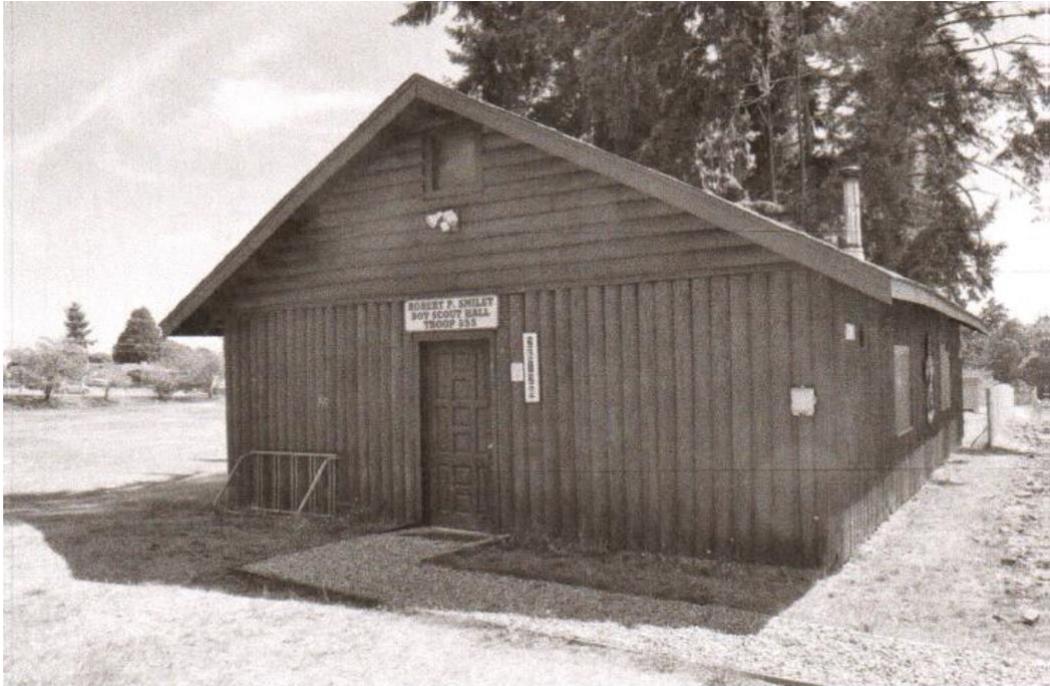
Floor Plan
 Kingston Scout Hall



The interior of Smiley Scout Hall, c.1963 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Scout and parent gathering at Scout Hall, c.1970 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



The exterior of Kingston/Smiley Scout Hall, c.1965 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Detail of Boy Scout motto on west side of building, circa 1965 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Troop 555 insignia, circa 1993 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Troop 555 meeting, Feb 14, 2017 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



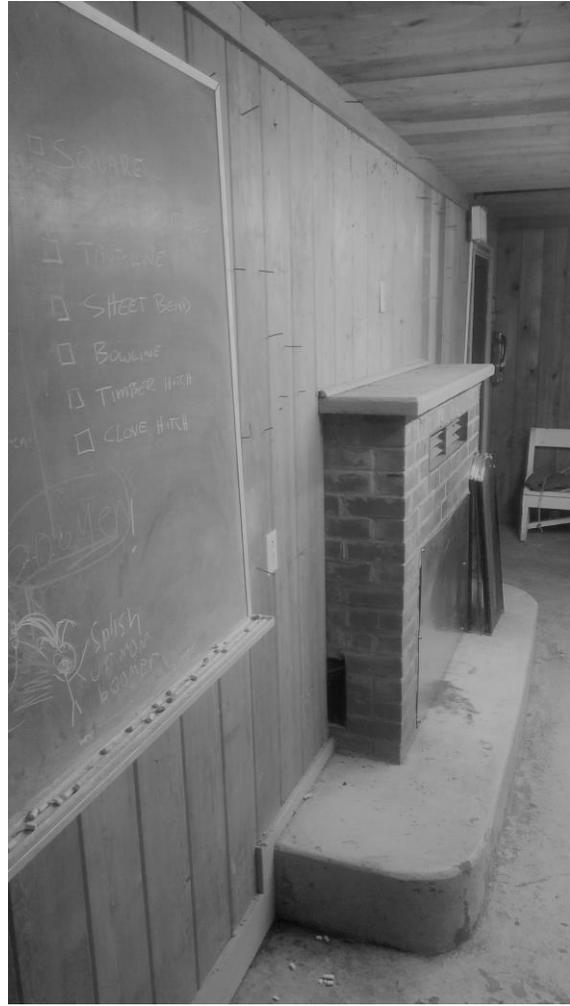
North / Main façade of Scout Hall (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



South / Rear façade of Scout Hall (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Truss detail, Feb 24, 2020
(photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Detail of south wall looking west, Feb 24, 2020
(photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Detail of attic/loft access adjacent to main entry door, Feb 24, 2020 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)



Detail of east wall looking south showing church pews, Feb 24, 2020 (photo courtesy of Troop 555)